2006–2007

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

Saskatchewan Finance

2007-00004

Minister's Message

I am pleased to introduce the Department of Finance performance plan for 2006-07, outlining our role in managing and controlling the Province's finances, administering and collecting taxes, and supporting Government's accountability in the use of public funds.

Finance is the agency responsible for receiving the majority of the Government's revenue and disbursing funds to other departments for vital public services and programs including health care and education.

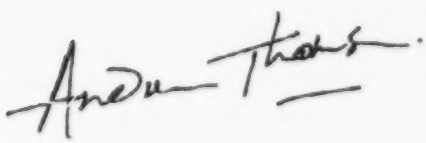
The Department monitors both internal and external pressures on the provincial tax system, analyzing their effects on fairness and competitiveness. The Department will implement Business Tax reforms announced as part of the 2006-07 Budget; reforms that will help build the economy and create jobs.

For the upcoming year, Finance will also continue to work with the federal government to reform the federal Equalization Program. In particular, the Department will advance issues of specific interest to Saskatchewan by seeking to have non-renewable resource revenue excluded from the Equalization formula and returning to a 10-province standard to determine program entitlements. These measures would ensure Saskatchewan keeps more of its non-renewable resource revenue, to reinvest in our province – to help build the economy, and better meet the needs and priorities of Saskatchewan people.

Finance continues work on the Human Resources and Payroll components of the government's central financial system (the MIDAS project), with base functionality targeted for implementation March 14, 2006.

The Department continues to play a lead role in the government-wide strategic planning process by co-ordinating department performance plans – measures included in the plans continue to enable us to evaluate both our progress and our success, helping ensure government is accountable to the people it serves.

The Department of Finance plan is part of our ongoing commitment to accountability, transparency, and performance measures. I am dedicated to the goals and actions outlined in this plan, and will report on the progress in the summer of 2007.



Andrew Thomson
Minister of Finance

Who We Are

The mandate of the Department of Finance is to provide options and advice to Treasury Board and Cabinet on managing and controlling the finances of the Province. The Department administers and collects Provincial taxes and it supports the Government in being accountable to the Legislature and the public in the use of public funds.

The Department of Finance receives the majority of revenues for the Government of Saskatchewan to fund public services such as health care, education and road maintenance. In addition, the Department manages the debt of the General Revenue Fund (GRF). To ensure an increasing level of government-wide accountability, Finance assists departments in implementing the Government's Accountability Framework.

Finance also delivers the Saskatchewan Savings Bonds program, administers provincial pension plans, employee benefit plans, and provincial tax programs, including the Provincial Sales Tax, and keeps the public informed on finance-related issues.

CORE BUSINESS AREAS

The Department provides the Minister of Finance, Treasury Board, Cabinet and the Government with information, analysis, advice and services in eight core business areas.

REVENUE, EXPENDITURE, FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Finance supports effective government decision-making by providing up-to-date information, policy analysis and advice. Finance establishes and co-ordinates the budget development process to enable Treasury Board and Cabinet to make effective resource allocation decisions.

The Department works with the federal government on Equalization, the Canada Health and Social Transfer, the Canada Pension Plan, and fiscal arrangements concerning First Nations in Saskatchewan and other federal/provincial programs. As well, the Department houses the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, which reports on provincial and national economic indicators.

COMPTROLLERSHIP/FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Finance assists the Legislature and the Government in controlling and accounting for the receipt and disposition of public money. The Department develops and maintains the government-wide revenue and expenditure systems and ensures that effective financial management and accounting procedures are in place. It also prepares and publishes financial accountability reports, including the Public Accounts.

Finance ensures that departments maintain appropriate financial and management controls and are properly accounting for their revenues and expenditures.

REVENUE OPERATIONS

Finance administers several provincial government revenue and tax rebate programs. This work involves identifying and collecting tax revenues, conducting audits, issuing tax refunds and providing information related to tax and rebate programs.

TREASURY AND DEBT MANAGEMENT

Finance borrows to meet the funding requirements of the Government, including Crown corporations and other government agencies. It manages the provincial debt and the cash position of the GRF. It also provides an investment management service for various funds administered by the Government, Crown corporations and other agencies.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE PLANNING, REPORTING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Finance works to improve program effectiveness, budgeting, performance measurement and reporting practices across government. It works with departments to develop and implement a "managing for results" approach within executive government, to provide analysis and advice to Treasury Board and to undertake analysis of assigned special projects and reviews.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Finance provides direction, guidance and support for internal operations and client agencies. This includes executive management, communications, human resources, financial services, procurement, information technology, security and facilities.

PENSION AND BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Finance, through the Public Employees Benefits Agency, administers pension and benefit programs for employees of the executive government, Crown corporations and government-funded bodies.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION POLICY

Finance, through the Personnel Policy Secretariat, is responsible for strategic policy development and analysis on matters related to public sector compensation and management of collective bargaining. The unit collaborates with other officials in the Department of Finance and relevant line departments on financial parameters for collective bargaining and with government organizations in the development of human resource policies that have compensation implications.

Finance provides advice, analysis and secretariat support to the Cabinet Committee on Public Sector Compensation and co-ordinates implementation of Cabinet decisions related to its mandate.

Plan at a Glance

The purpose of this performance plan is to look forward and provide a forecast of the challenges and opportunities ahead, and how we plan to address them. This section of the report lays out our plan for the future. It identifies the outcomes we are working towards to continue to pursue accountable, fiscally responsible Government, prosperity and social well-being.

This is the fifth performance plan publicly released by the Department of Finance. The Department is undertaking a complete review of its current performance plan. As a result, there are minimal changes to this year's performance plan. It is expected that the Department will develop a new performance plan in 2006-07, once the review is complete.

Below is a summary of our plan for 2006-07. The goals and objectives articulate the outcomes the Department is pursuing, which support our vision. The performance measures are one of the key tools we will use to gauge our progress towards objectives. The Department will report on actual compared to planned progress at the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year, in the Department's 2006-07 Annual Report.

OUR VISION – As a leading Canadian finance department, Saskatchewan Finance pursues accountable, fiscally responsible Government, prosperity and social well-being.

GOAL 1

Saskatchewan is fiscally strong and stable

OBJECTIVE 1 – *A sound financial plan*

Performance Measures

- Government debt to GDP ratio
- Credit ratings

GOAL 2

Saskatchewan is a prosperous and socially responsible province

OBJECTIVE 1 – *A simple, fair, competitive tax structure*

Performance Measures

- Income and sales taxes paid by representative taxpayers
- Interprovincial tax comparisons for selected average family profiles
- Tax progressiveness index
- Number of audits conducted on businesses liable for taxes under the statutes administered by Finance

GOAL 3

Government is accountable for its revenue, expenditure and results

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Effective government financial reporting*

Performance Measures

- Date that Volume 1 of the Public Accounts is released
- Number of audit qualifications on the Province's General Revenue Fund financial statements and on the Summary Financial Statements
- Number of Public Sector Accounting Board standards that have not been implemented in the General Revenue Fund financial statements and in the Summary Financial Statements

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Effective government-wide financial management practices*

Performance Measures

- Number of significant deficiencies that were detected but not appropriately addressed by the affected departments
- Successful implementation of the MIDAS system on time and within budget

OBJECTIVE 3 – *Effective performance planning, management and reporting*

Performance Measures

- Number of departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release performance plans
- Number of departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release performance results reports

GOAL 4

Saskatchewan Finance provides excellent services to its clients

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Accurate and timely information and services*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of businesses, which collect taxes on behalf of Government, that are satisfied with the Department's quality of service
- Per cent of businesses, which collect taxes on behalf of Government, that are satisfied with the Department's timeliness of responses, refunds and adjustments

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Ease of tax compliance*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of tax payments processed electronically
- Number of farmers that applied for fuel tax permit renewals on-line

2006-07 Financial Overview

The Department's overall budget for 2006-07 is $259.8 million. Of this amount, $40.7 million is appropriated for the operations of the Department of Finance. The remaining $219.1 million is appropriated for payments to public service pensions and benefits.

The following table lists the 2006-07 breakdown of Department spending by function.

2006-07 ESTIMATES	*(in thousands of dollars)*
Central Management and Services	$ 7,631
Treasury and Debt Management	2,709
Provincial Comptroller	8,714
Budget Analysis	4,575
Revenue	16,585
Personnel Policy Secretariat	396
Miscellaneous Payments	96
Department Operations Appropriation	$ 40,706
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(900)
Capital Asset Amortization	953
Department Expense	$ 40,759
Public Service Pensions and Benefits	219,103
Total Appropriation	$ 259,809
REVENUE	$ 5,846,311
FTE Staff Complement	463

Trends and Issues

The Department of Finance is committed to leadership and innovation in the development of public policy and the practice of public financial management. Accomplishments in 2005-06 provide a solid foundation on which we will continue to improve service to other agencies of government and to the people of Saskatchewan.

Backed by high commodity prices, strong exports, sustained consumer spending, resurgent investment and a larger-than-expected crop harvest, Saskatchewan's economy grew at an annual rate of 8.0 per cent and 3.1 per cent in nominal and real GDP, respectively, in 2005. The Province's nominal and real GDP growth rates are poised to ease to 5.0 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively, in 2006 as interest rates and the value of the Canadian dollar are anticipated to continue to go up and the harvest is assumed to return to a normal level. Saskatchewan's growth rate, particularly for next year, may be higher or lower depending on the economic prospects of the Province's main trading partners, commodity prices and the harvest. These factors will be monitored and advice and support to Treasury Board and Cabinet will be provided on an ongoing basis.

The Department is expected to monitor both internal and external pressures on the provincial tax system and analyse the effects those pressures may have on the fairness and competitiveness of the tax system. Finance played an important role in providing technical and policy assistance to the Saskatchewan Business Tax Review Committee. In 2006-07, Finance will continue to provide policy analysis and advice to the Government on federal and provincial taxation issues, including any future decisions respecting the Business Tax Review Committee's recommendations. Finance will also continue to participate in the development of new terms for the major federal/provincial fiscal arrangements, including analysis of the implications for Saskatchewan of the report of the federally-appointed Independent Expert Panel on Equalization. In addition, the Department expects to continue work with our partners on a number of ongoing intergovernmental issues, including municipal and First Nations taxation. Finally, many public sector collective agreements will expire in 2006-07, and Finance will provide policy analysis and strategic advice to Government regarding the renewal of those agreements.

Government accounting is in the midst of considerable change. A number of new accounting recommendations have significantly affected the Government accounting environment. For example, the Government implemented the full accrual model for reporting capital assets for the 2004-05 financial statements. As well, in 2005-06, Finance undertook work to assess and implement new recommendations regarding the reporting entity for the Government's financial statements. Other significant accounting pronouncements are pending.

The accounting profession continues to examine a number of other areas. One of the more fundamental of these is accounting for government grants. As grants comprise the largest category of government expenditures, the potential implications of accounting changes are significant. Considerable work is required to evaluate the recommendations as they are developed and to provide advice to Government about the potential impact on Saskatchewan.

Phase 1 of the Government's new central financial system, known as the MIDAS project, was completed April 1, 2003. Work continues on the Human Resources and Payroll components of the system. Challenges will continue as the remaining phases of the project are completed and employees adapt to the new system.

Many federal and provincial jurisdictions have strengthened their public reporting practices and are reviewing the need for sustainable data delivery systems to enable development of meaningful documentation for clear strategic plans and balanced performance reporting. There is increased interest in combining program evaluation practices and those of performance measurement to provide timely, relevant and understandable information that would help decision-makers and address government accountability responsibilities. Emphasis is being placed on the identification of performance outcomes – measuring whether government programs and policies are achieving their stated objectives and making a difference in peoples' lives. Auditors at the federal and provincial level remain interested in the progress governments are making in implementing a managing for results approach and are starting to explore ways to ensure performance information provided is reliable and accurate.

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

This section details the Department's performance plan for 2006-07. Under each goal, a number of objectives have been established that support progress towards the broader goal statement. For each objective, a set of key actions that will be completed in 2006-07 has been identified. They are the means for making progress on the objectives. To assess whether key actions support the objective, a set of performance measures has been established for each objective to gauge progress towards meeting the objective.

GOAL 1

Saskatchewan is fiscally strong and stable

***OBJECTIVE 1** – A sound financial plan*

Fiscal strength and stability are important indicators for those who live in our province and those who are looking to invest. The Department contributes to the Province's fiscal strength and stability through the development of a sound financial plan. Sound financial planning is a key component in assisting government decision-makers to develop and deliver annual budgets and effectively allocate public resources.

A financial plan includes details of revenue, expenditure, assets, liabilities and debt. These details are reported on a GRF basis and a Summary Financial Statement (SFS) basis.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Issue timely economic and fiscal forecasts, reports and analysis, as well as fiscal strategies and options, to achieve the Government's financial plan within *The Balanced Budget Act* and *The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act*.
- On an ongoing basis, operate a budget process that provides decision-makers with realistic program options and the information necessary to analyze those options.
- On an ongoing basis, optimize the Government's cost of borrowing through:
  - ~ strategic financing
  - ~ cash management
  - ~ debt administration and foreign exchange and risk management.
- Issue timely quarterly financial reports to the general public, providing information on the Government's current financial position.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Government debt to GDP ratio	19% *[March 31, 2005]*

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of all goods and services produced in the economy.

Government Debt is the debt incurred to fund deficits and cash shortfalls that must be repaid using future government receipts. This does not include debt incurred for, and repayable by, Crown corporations.

Investor confidence is influenced by this ratio because it provides investors with a measure of the Province's debt relative to the income available to manage that debt.

The Department is able to influence many of the factors that contribute to the size of the Government's debt and GDP levels by providing advice to decision-makers and adhering to prudent debt management policies. However, factors such as the state of the global, North American and Canadian economies are beyond the Department's control.

What are we measuring?

Credit ratings

Where are we starting from?

Standard & Poor's: AA-

Moody's Investors Service: Aa2

Dominion Bond Rating Service: A(high)

[July 2005]

A credit rating is an evaluation by an independent, objective agency of a borrower's capability to service and repay debt. The borrower may be a private firm, or a public entity such as a provincial or national government. An upgrade in a borrower's credit rating means there has been an improvement in that borrower's financial position.

Factors used to reach a credit rating include:

- government structure and intergovernmental relations
- economy
- budget
- financial position
- policy direction and overall management ability

GOAL 2

Saskatchewan is a prosperous and socially responsible province

***OBJECTIVE 1** – A simple, fair, competitive tax structure*

A simple, fair and competitive tax structure promotes prosperity, while enhancing social responsibility, by ensuring adequate resources for the delivery of important public services. Competitive taxes are a key feature in Saskatchewan's ability to compete for jobs and investments. However, taxation is only one of many factors that can influence the relative prosperity and social responsibility of the province.

The tax system's primary objective is to raise the necessary revenues required to finance key public services like health care, education and highways. Tax levels are therefore dependent on the Government's revenue requirements. Saskatchewan's tax levels are held as low as possible while ensuring adequate resources to pay for services and to maintain the financial stability of the Province.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Provide policy advice to the Government on the recommendations received from the Business Tax Review Committee and implement the Government's response to the recommendations.
- Continue to monitor:
  - ~ the tax systems of other jurisdictions
  - ~ the revenue requirements of the Government
- Conduct audits on businesses paying or collecting taxes administered by Finance.

What are we measuring?

Income and sales taxes paid by representative taxpayers

Where are we starting from?

Single parent earning $25,000 paid $515

One income family earning $50,000 paid $4,007

Two income family earning $75,000 paid $6,432

[2004; latest data available]

Saskatchewan's tax levels for representative taxpayers provide an indication of the amount of after-tax or disposable income available to residents. Declining tax levels are therefore suggestive of improvements in the relative prosperity of residents.

The Department's influence in this area is through the ongoing advice it provides to decision-makers about revenue policy issues.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Interprovincial tax comparisons for selected average family profiles	Single parent earning $25,000 – 3rd lowest One income family earning $50,000 – 4th lowest Two income family earning $75,000 – 4th lowest *[2004; latest data available]*

Saskatchewan's interprovincial ranking with respect to the tax levels of representative taxpayers is indicative of the competitiveness of our tax system. This measure can be significantly impacted by tax changes initiated in Saskatchewan and by tax changes occurring in other provinces.

Despite the increase to the PST rate in April 2004, Saskatchewan's tax competitiveness relative to other provinces did not change, and even improved for low-income families as a result of the Saskatchewan Sales Tax Credit enhancements.

The Department's influence in this area is through the ongoing advice it provides to decision-makers about revenue policy issues.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Tax progressiveness index	20.2 *[2004; latest data available]*

The tax progressiveness index measures relative tax levels between different income levels and provides an indication of how progressive, or fair, the provincial tax system is; the higher the index, the more progressive the tax system. The measure compares the income and sales taxes payable by a one-income family earning $100,000 with the taxes payable by a one-income family earning $25,000.

The Department's influence in this area is through the ongoing advice it provides to decision-makers about revenue policy issues.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of audits conducted on businesses liable for taxes under the statutes administered by Finance	4,518 *[2004-05]*

This is a measure of the number of field and desk audits conducted by Finance on businesses required to collect or pay taxes administered by the Department. It is necessary that the level of audit coverage is high enough to promote voluntary compliance and to ensure that all businesses are paying and remitting the required taxes. This helps to ensure fairness and competitiveness among businesses. The Department has a moderate level of influence since staff vacancies and the long training period for new auditors will impact the number of audits.

GOAL 3

Government is accountable for its revenue, expenditure and results

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Effective government financial reporting*

Continued strong financial reporting is key to strong accountability. Timely, reliable and relevant financial information provides the necessary accounting for the receipt and spending of public funds.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Develop and implement a work plan to prepare and release the Province's Public Accounts by August 1.
- Prepare financial statements in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) standards and work with the Provincial Auditor to resolve differences in opinion.
- Monitor the activities of the PSAB of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA). Implement new standards as soon as approval to do so is obtained.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Date that Volume 1 of the Public Accounts is released	July 13, 2005 *[2004-05 Public Accounts]*

Timeliness of the financial statements contributes to the Government's accountability. The "gold standard" is considered attained if the statements are released by August 1. The Department's level of influence over the measure is moderate and achievement is affected by other departments, agencies, the Provincial Auditor and Treasury Board.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of audit qualifications on the Province's General Revenue Fund financial statements and on the Summary Financial Statements	3 GRF 0 SFS *[2004-05 Public Accounts]*

Reliability of the financial statements contributes to the Government's accountability. Financial statements that have few (or no) audit qualifications are considered more reliable than those that have many. The Department's level of influence over the measure is moderate and achievement is affected by other departments, agencies, the Provincial Auditor and Treasury Board.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of Public Sector Accounting Board standards that have not been implemented in the General Revenue Fund financial statements and in the Summary Financial Statements	1 (pension accounting for GRF financial statements) *[2004-05 Public Accounts]*

Relevance of the financial statements contributes to the Government's accountability. Financial statements that comply with PSAB standards are considered more relevant than those that do not. The Department's level of influence over the objective is moderate and achievement is affected by Treasury Board.

OBJECTIVE 2 *– Effective government-wide financial management practices*

Effective government-wide financial practices are essential to the operation of government. The Department of Finance is committed to a high standard concerning financial systems and practices for managing resources and achieving fiscal accountability. The Department provides direction to and works with other departments and agencies to ensure appropriate financial management practices are employed.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Through our cyclical risk analysis process, we plan to assess the internal controls on approximately 140 financial programs/systems. Where improvements are required, effective solutions will be recommended for implementation.
- The Basic components of MIDAS Human Resources/Payroll will be implemented in March 2006. The remainder of the MIDAS project will be transferred to the Public Service Commission effective April 1, 2006.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of significant deficiencies that were detected, but not appropriately addressed by the affected departments	0 *[2004-05]*

In order to achieve the objective of effective government-wide financial practices, departments must appropriately address all significant deficiencies that are detected. A significant deficiency is an internal control deficiency that adversely affects the Government's ability to safeguard its assets and record, process or report financial data reliably. Finance develops and implements financial policies and procedures and conducts internal control reviews to monitor for significant deficiencies in financial programs/systems. This measure will indicate if any significant deficiencies that were detected were not appropriately addressed. The Department has a high level of influence over the measurement results.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Successful implementation of the MIDAS system on time and within budget	The first phase of MIDAS was launched in 2001-02. It was successfully completed during 2002-03 and implemented on time and under budget on April 1, 2003. The Purchasing components of phase 2 were completed during the 2003-04 fiscal year. The Fixed Assets component of phase 2 was developed and implemented by one department during the 2005-06 fiscal year. To date, the project continues to be under budget, although the project has been extended by one year to allow sufficient time to complete phase 3 – Base Human Resources/Payroll.

MIDAS is the new government-wide system to replace our 17-year-old financial, human resources and payroll systems. It is a state-of-the-art, web-based system that will support the future needs of the Government. It will improve our effectiveness through the use of workflow to automate approvals and avoid entry of data into multiple systems. It will improve our access to integrated financial information and will support new functionality for the budgeting and forecasting processes.

In order to provide the financial services required by the Government, it is critical that the Department implement each phase of MIDAS on time and within budget, and that the new system meets the needs of the users.

The Department has significant influence over all aspects of the MIDAS project, including the time and cost required to complete each phase.

OBJECTIVE 3 *– Effective performance planning, management and reporting*

Government's Accountability Framework is intended to strengthen accountability to the Legislature and public by providing more and better information about what results government intends to achieve, how it will spend money, and, at year-end, its actual financial and program performance results. To be effective, performance plans and annual reports must be timely, complete and accurate. As the lead department, Finance works to build capacity within government, set expectations and support departments in their planning and measurement work. Over time, the end result will be better information for managers and decision-makers, enhanced accountability both internally and publicly, and ultimately, improved government performance for Saskatchewan people. Links to performance plans and annual reports for participating departments and agencies are available at http://www.gov.sk.ca/finance/accountability/default.htm

The Performance Management Branch is interested in ensuring that all departments are participating in performance planning. Now that accountability processes have matured over the past five years, Finance will focus on improving the quality and reliability of performance measures in the plans. High quality plans will be those that meet the needs of departments for decision making, and the needs of Ministers within a co-ordinated system of planning, budgeting and reporting. This will be monitored through regular dialogue with our client departments, central agencies and Minister's offices as deemed appropriate, and will, in turn, affect how the Performance Management Branch undertakes further work on the Accountability Framework.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Review options to include program assessment to complement the accountability framework.
- Pursue options for continued streamlining of performance management and reporting processes.
- Continue to examine accountability processes in other jurisdictions to assess best-practices in results-based reporting.
- Participate in or lead special projects and reviews.
- Continue to provide support for improved content in departments' public reports.

What are we measuring?

Number of departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release performance plans

Where are we starting from?

17 departments

3 Treasury Board Crown corporations[1]

2 key cross-government strategies[2]

[June 2005]

[1] *Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority and Saskatchewan Communications Network*

[2] *Safe Drinking Water and KidsFirst*

Timely release of departmental performance plans at the start of the year is essential to strong public accountability. Plans describe what departments intend to accomplish with their annual budget appropriations, the specific actions they will take and how progress will be measured. Plans released at the start of the year also serve as the basis for reporting on actual progress at year-end. This measure tracks the number of executive government departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release performance plans, developed in accordance with Government's Accountability Framework. The Department of Finance develops planning guidelines, sets annual expectations and works with other central agencies to support departments and Treasury Board in strengthening performance planning, measurement and reporting. However, individual departments and agencies are responsible for preparing their own annual performance plans.

What are we measuring?

Number of departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release performance results reports

Where are we starting from?

17 departments

3 Treasury Board Crown corporations[3]

2 key cross-government strategy[4]

[2004-05 Annual Reports; August 2005]

[3] *SPMC, SLGA and SWA. SPMC became a line department in April 2005; SCN did not release an annual report according to Finance's content requirements in 2005*

[4] *Safe Drinking Water Strategy and KidsFirst*

Timely public release of year-end reports on actual performance results as compared to original performance plans is a key means of demonstrating accountability for results. Department annual reports describe the organization's activities during the year, the results they achieved and the progress they made as compared to their performance plan for that year and must be

tabled within the timelines set out in *The Tabling of Documents Act*. This measure tracks the number of executive government departments, Treasury Board Crown corporations and key cross-government strategies that publicly release annual performance results reports, developed in accordance with Government's Accountability Framework. The Department of Finance develops reporting guidelines, sets annual expectations and works with other central agencies to support departments and Treasury Board in strengthening performance planning, measurement and reporting. However, individual departments and agencies are responsible for preparing their own annual reports.

GOAL 4

Saskatchewan Finance provides excellent services to its clients

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Accurate and timely information and services*

The Department is committed to serving its clients – individuals and businesses, government departments and decision-makers, and the public at large – with integrity and professionalism. We continually seek ways to respond more effectively and efficiently to our clients' needs.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Conduct and report survey results for businesses collecting taxes.
- Respond to most requests for tax information within 24 hours and provide accurate information.
- Process tax refunds within 21 days of receiving all required documentation.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of businesses, which collect taxes on behalf of government, that are satisfied with the Department's quality of service	96% *[2004-05]*

The Department has committed to conducting periodic surveys of businesses collecting taxes on behalf of government. This allows businesses to evaluate the Department's performance and helps the Department determine how its services may be improved. This is a measurement of the percentage of businesses collecting taxes that indicate they were somewhat to very satisfied with the quality of information received from Saskatchewan Finance (tax bulletins, quality of answers from information officers). The Department has moderate influence on this measure as the results are very dependent upon the survey response rate from the public. Changes in tax policy may influence how a business responds to the survey.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Per cent of businesses, which collect taxes on behalf of government, that are satisfied with the Department's timeliness of responses, refunds and adjustments	95% *[2004-05]*

The Department has committed to conducting periodic surveys of businesses collecting taxes on behalf of government. This allows businesses to evaluate the Department's performance and helps the Department determine how its services may be improved. This is a measurement of the percentage of businesses collecting taxes that indicate they were somewhat to very satisfied with the Department's timeliness of responses and overall program delivery. The Department has moderate influence on this measure, as the results are very dependent upon the survey response rate from the public. Changes in tax policy may influence how a business responds to the survey.

***OBJECTIVE 2** – Ease of tax compliance*

The Department wants to ensure that its clients can report taxes owing or obtain tax benefits as easily as possible. This helps reduce compliance costs for clients.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Continue to promote the Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Service (SETS) to clients through the use of information stuffers included with tax returns every three months, using e-mail marketing to clients that have provided an e-mail address and through our link on the gov.sk.ca "Online Services" web page.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Per cent of tax payments processed electronically	50% *[2004-05]*

This is a measure of the percentage of tax payments that are processed electronically. The Department accepts tax payments from a variety of electronic methods including SETS, Internet banking, and payments made at financial institutions. The Department's influence over this measure is limited to the extent that it can only encourage businesses to submit returns electronically. They may still choose to make payments manually through the postal system. The data source for this information is produced from statistical reports from the mainframe revenue system.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of farmers that applied for fuel tax permit renewals on-line	7,007 *[2004-05]*

This is a measure of the number of farmers that submit their fuel tax permit renewals using SETS. SETS allows farmers to file an application on-line rather than filing a paper application. The Department's influence over this measure is limited to the extent that it can only encourage farmers to submit applications electronically. They may still choose to do so manually. The data source for this information is produced from statistical reports in the SETS database.

For More Information

If you have any questions or comments about this plan, call 1-866-862-6246.

All Saskatchewan Finance programs and services can be accessed at:
www.gov.sk.ca/finance

All Saskatchewan Finance publications can be accessed at:
www.gov.sk.ca/finance/publicationsall.htm